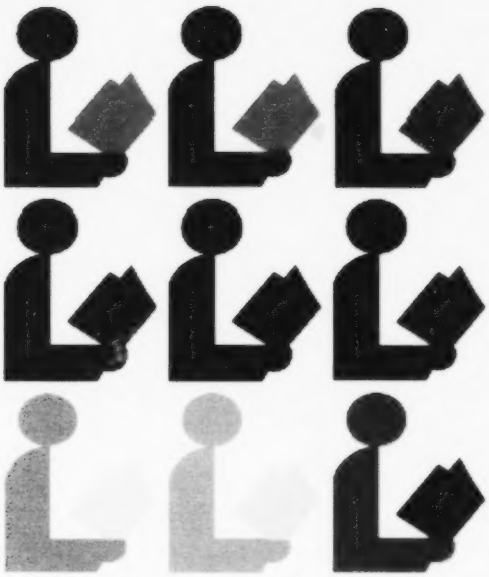
Reaching Our Vision



Providing High Quality, Sustainable Public Library Services For all Manitobans

May 23, 2006

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Executive Summary

In April, 2005, Cabinet approved a review of public library services in the Province of Manitoba, with a view to improving access to library services for those Manitobans currently having limited or no access to a public library. The purpose of the review was to explore potential partnerships with public schools and school libraries and other significant issues such as long term sustainability, the unserved population and adaptation to continued technological changes in information science.

A review committee was appointed with fifteen representatives from public libraries, academic libraries, library trustees, literacy organizations, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, library associations and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. The committee was chaired by Kerri Irvin-Ross the MLA from Fort Garry.

The committee designed and distributed four different surveys, targeted at municipal corporations, library boards, First Nations and Aboriginal communities and users of the Province's books by mail program (Open Shelf). The overall response rate of 48% exceeded expectations; however the rate of response of the First Nations and Aboriginal communities survey of 19% has an unreliable error level.

Survey (% returned)	Sent	Received		Error Level
All Library Boards (84%)	56	47	+/-	5.7%
All Municipalities (47%)	199	94	+/-	7.3%
Open Shelf Users (47%)	800	379	+/-	4.6%
First Nation Communities (19%)	64	12	+/-	25.5%

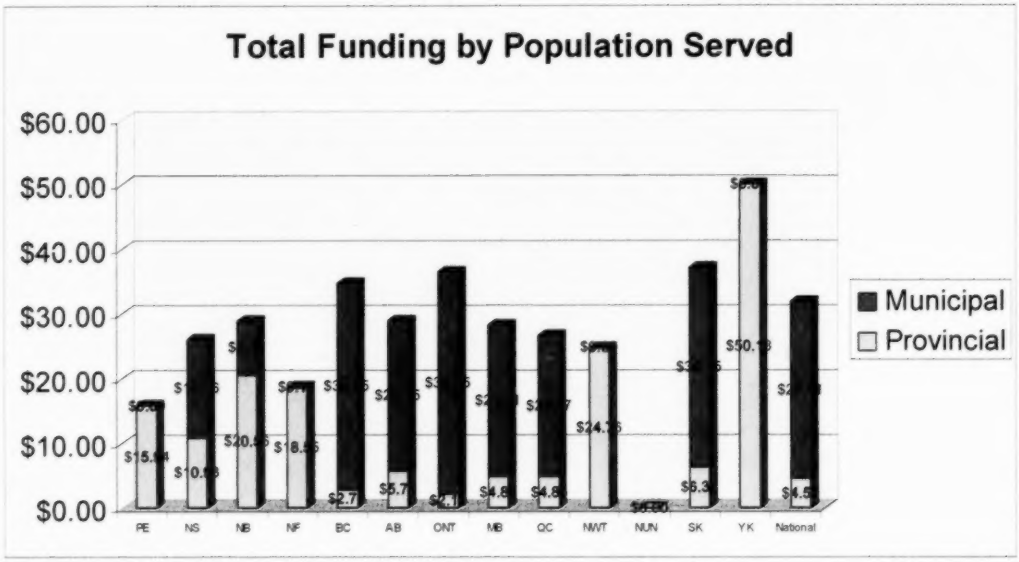
The confidence in the error level is 95% (19 times out of 20) for all four surveys.

A full day at the PLS Branch Conference (October 22-24, 2005) was devoted to the library review. Municipal representatives, library trustees, and library staff were invited to a World Café facilitated workshop to hear a summary of the survey results and provide input.

The resulting vision for Manitoba's public library system is: **To provide high quality, sustainable public library services for all Manitobans.** Five of the 22 recommendations developed by the committee are directly related to sustainability issues.

Municipal corporations and library boards are particularly concerned about the sustainability of the library system. When the total per capita provincial and municipal funding for the public system ($28.27 per capita) is considered, Manitoba is below the national average of $31.94 per capita. There is no single model in Canada for municipal/provincial contributions to public library funding. The Provincial funding contribution ranks 10th out of the 12 reporting

provinces/territories. Municipal funding per capita is at the opposite end of the scale, with a rank of 4th out of the 12 reporting provinces and territories.



The data for Nunavut was not available for 2003.

Return on investment studies in Canada and the United States link public libraries with community sustainability. The National Adult Literacy Directorate (NALD) cites public libraries as key partners in adult literacy. As a community development incubator, sustainable libraries will return tax funds six-fold to their communities.[1]

Recommendations regarding sustainability of the public library system focus on funding, population migration, library establishment, gaining the benefits of scale and reducing costs. There are five recommendations in this category.

That the Province and municipalities establish a funding mechanism to address current trends in population and operating costs. (Recommendation 10)

That the annual Collection Development Grant be extended to include all library branches in the province that meet the qualification of being open at least ten hours a week, and agree to share their collections through the MAPLIN system. (Recommendation 11)

[1] Wanda Monroe. **" Libraries Return on Investment Study,"** Library Mosaics. 16 (November/December 2005): 12 -13. The National Adult Literacy Directorate cites *Dividends: The Value of Public Libraries in Canada* as institutions that support lifelong learning. (http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/dividend/page10.htm#b10.) The report was written by Leslie Filch and Jody Warner for The Library Action Committee of the Books and Periodical Council.

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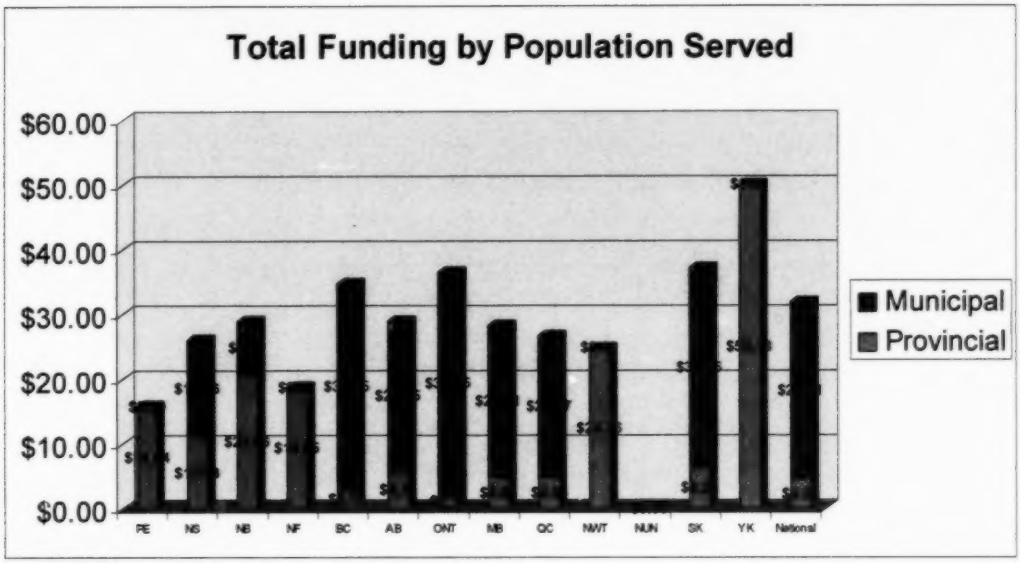

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That library regions consider mergers to create larger regions in order to gain economies of scale and to make the library region more attractive to non-established municipalities in the area. (Recommendation 12)

That an annual technology maintenance grant be made available to each library branch including Winnipeg Public Library to be used for hardware or software replacement, for purchase of digital content or internet access. (Recommendation 13)

That the Public Library Services Branch develop governance and operational guidelines for joint use facilities. (Recommendation 14)

Library service for all Manitobans was a demand identified throughout the review. The fact that one in six Manitobans (174,839) live in a community without public library service emerged as a significant concern. Manitoba's rate of municipal participation (83%) in the library system is the second lowest in the country and far below the national average (94%). The 'unserved' community includes First Nations and Aboriginal communities, northern affairs communities and municipal corporations that have not yet established library services.

The following nine recommendations focus on reaching the goal of providing library service to all Manitobans.

That the library establishment grant be restructured to provide a greater incentive. (Recommendation 1)

That the Public Libraries Act be amended to allow municipalities that currently do not have an established public library service to sign an agreement(s) with one or more existing library regions to provide service to a portion or portions of the municipality. (Recommendation 2)

That the Province provide financial support for an information campaign about the benefits of libraries and services they provide. (Recommendation 3)

That the Open Shelf and the Travelling Library programs be reviewed by the Public Library Services Branch. (Recommendation 4)

That the *Public Libraries Act* and Regulation be amended to provide First Nations and Aboriginal communities, national parks and military bases with a status equivalent to municipalities for the purpose of establishment and funding local library services. (Recommendation 5)

That the Minister establish a task force comprised of leaders within the Aboriginal community and library specialists to provide the Minister with advice regarding library services for the Aboriginal communities. (Recommendation 6)

That an Aboriginal library consultant be hired to provide support and advice regarding the establishment of public library services. (Recommendation 7)

That public libraries strive to remove the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing the benefits of the library. (Recommendation 8)

That public libraries, in partnership with the Public Library Services Branch, examine co-operative options to provide library services to home bound residents. (Recommendation 9)

The final section of the report focuses on continuing to improve the quality of library service in Manitoba. Public Libraries are important institutions in their communities, with significantly high rates of use. Fifty-six percent of eligible Manitobans have an active library membership and borrow 8.5 million items a year. The public library is the main point of public Internet access for many communities and provides children's programming and adult skills development, as well as a number of other community based initiatives.

A recent study conducted in Pennsylvania concluded that "children who attend library summer reading programs read significantly better than those children who attended a camp program, suggesting that time spent in a library significantly enhances children's reading achievement when compared to activities more purely recreational in nature. This finding underscores the important position the library plays in reading achievement of all children, particularly those who lack access to books and other reading materials in their daily lives."[2]

Eight recommendations have been developed regarding the use of technology and partnerships to maintain and enhance the quality of Manitoba's public library system.

That high speed internet access be made available at every public library in the province for staff and public access. (Recommendation 15)

That the development of local library Internet servers be encouraged to enable province wide resource and information sharing. (Recommendation 16)

That MAPLIN be expanded to include content such as electronic journals, books and audio books throughout the province for all library users.
(Recommendation 17)

That library staff and trustees receive ongoing training. (Recommendation 18)

That the role and capacity of public libraries to provide lifelong learning and community development be strengthened. (Recommendation 19)

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[2] Dr. Donna Celano and Dr. Susan B. Neuman. *The Role of Public Libraries in Children's Literacy Development: An Evaluation Report.* (Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Commonwealth Libraries, February 2001), p.48.
(http://www.statelibrary.state.pa.us/libraries/lib/libraries/Role%20of%Libraries.pdf.)

That the Public Library Services Branch, in partnership with government and non-government agencies, develop guidelines for public library literacy programs. (Recommendation 20)

That the Public Library Services Branch create five Librarian Advisory Committees to provide advice, exchange information and raise ideas. (Recommendation 21)

That within three years the Public Library Services Branch develop, in consultation with the library community, recommended standards for hours of opening, staffing standards, collection development, and accessibility and other relevant measures of library effectiveness. (Recommendation 22)

1. Introduction

In April, 2005, Cabinet approved a review of public library services in the Province of Manitoba, with a view to improving access to library services for those Manitobans currently having limited or no access to a public library. The review was to explore potential partnerships with public schools and school libraries and other significant issues such as long term sustainability, the unserved population and adaptation to continued technological changes in information science.

The following terms of reference were established:

1. To review the current status of public library service in Manitoba including a comparison with other provincial library systems.
2. To seek input, through survey and discussion, from those concerned about public library service in Manitoba.
3. To develop a Manitoba vision for public library service.
4. To identify ways to sustain public libraries in Manitoba.
5. To propose ways to ensure all Manitobans have access to library services.
6. To identify the current and potential concerns facing the library community.
7. To investigate the feasibility of joint school/public libraries.
8. To create/develop action plans to address these issues for implementation by the library community, as well as Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

The first step in the process was the appointment of an ad hoc Library Review Committee to provide input into the process. The Committee is chaired by Ms Kerri Irvin-Ross, MLA for Fort Garry. Membership represents a broad range of library interests and includes the following individuals:

Mr. Bill Stilwell (Public Library Advisory Board/MLTA)
Mr. Ross Eadie (PLAB)
Mr. Joseph Nnadi (PLAB)
Ms. Carolynne Presser (PLAB)
Mr. Rick Walker (Winnipeg Public Library)
Ms. Mary Toma (South Central Regional Library)
Ms. Audrey Bessette (Bibliothèque Somerset Library)
Mr. Trevor Surgenor (Thompson Public Library)
Mr. Glenn Butchart (Parkland Regional Library)
Ms. Amanda Simard (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs)
Mr. Art Rempel (Association of Manitoba Municipalities)
Ms. Rachel Philippe (Association of Manitoba Municipalities)
Ms. Donna Sikorsky (Winnipeg Public Library Board)
Mr. Michael Hohner (Manitoba Library Association)
Ms. Bonita Cobb (Literacy Partners of Manitoba)

Staff – Ms. Maureen Cubberley (Director, Public Library Services Branch), Ken Kuryliw, Gwen Diment, Lenore Laverty

The primary tools for information gathering were four surveys targeting specific populations. The review Committee's first task was to review drafts of the surveys, which was accomplished at a meeting in June. Further refinement and review of the surveys was accomplished via e-mail.

One survey was developed for public library boards and explored issues relating to finances, operations, facility concerns, the unserved population, technology and human resources. The public library boards that responded to the survey represented 98.6% of the total population served by a public library. Open Shelf patrons were surveyed about their experience with that program. First Nation communities were asked to indicate their interest in the provision of public library service in their communities and municipal corporations were asked about the barriers and benefits to the provision of library service. All surveys were distributed in August with deadlines for response in September. Response to the surveys exceeded expectations, and all but the survey of First Nation communities were well within an acceptable error level.

Survey (% returned)	Sent	Received		Error Level
All Library Boards (84%)	56	47	+/-	5.7%
All Municipalities (47%)	199	94	+/-	7.3%
Open Shelf Users (47%)	800	379	+/-	4.6%
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The confidence in the error level is 95% (19 times out of 20) for all four surveys.

A full day at the PLS Branch Conference (October 22-24, 2005) was devoted to the library review. Municipal representatives, library trustees, and library staff were invited to a World Café to hear a summary of the survey results and provide input. The World Café was a facilitated consultation strategy to expand on the results of the surveys. The process succeeded in gathering information and clarifying some of the significant issues. The vision that was created is:

To provide high quality, sustainable public library services for all Manitobans.

This report is structured to support this vision and is divided into the following major sections:

- Overview - Library Service in Canada,
- Provide all Manitobans with Access to the Benefits of a Public Library,
- Create a Sustainable Library System Through Promotion and Funding,
- Create a High Quality 21st Century Library System

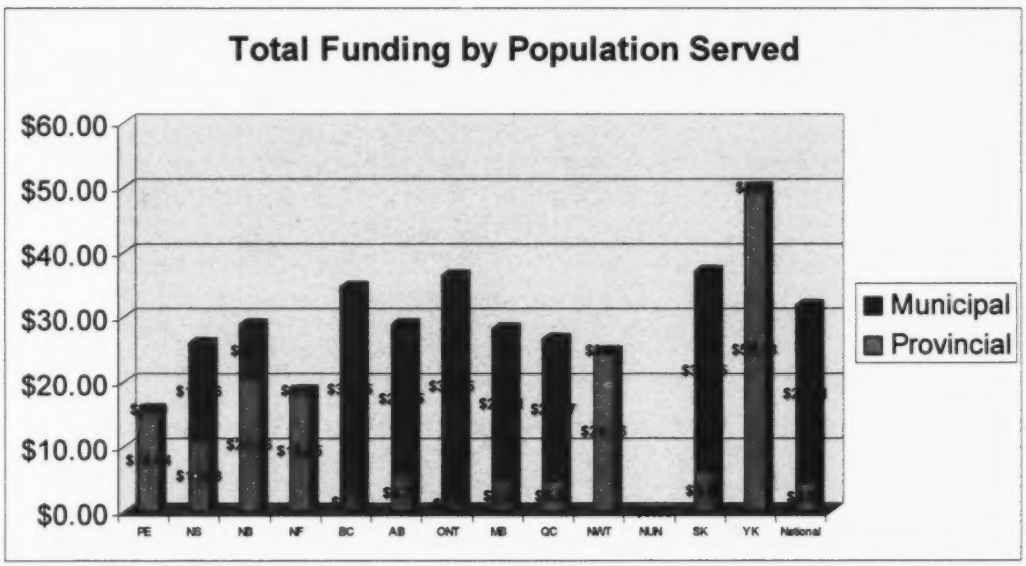
2. Overview - Library Service in Canada

The Public Library System in Manitoba is based on local municipal establishment and development. For the last 100 years the Province of Manitoba has enabled and encouraged the establishment of public libraries under the *Public Libraries Act*, but has never legislated their creation.

There are three general models of public library service in Canada. The first, seen in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick and Manitoba is based on municipal establishment, support and control, with the majority of funding provided by the municipality.

In the second model, which is used in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Yukon and North West Territories, the Province/Territory is responsible for establishment, support and control.

The final model is a hybrid, in which municipalities are legislated by the province to provide library service. However, the municipalities provide the majority of the financial support. This approach is used in Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia.



Note: the 2003 financial data from Nunavut was not available.

When considering combined municipal and provincial funding, Manitoba's contribution of $28.27 ranks 7th out of 12 in total funding based on the population served (929,533). The national average is $31.94.

Manitoba's average provincial contribution of $4.85 per capita ranks 10th out of 12 provinces and territories reporting. The municipal contribution of $23.41 per capita served ranks 4th out of 12 provinces, but is below the national average of

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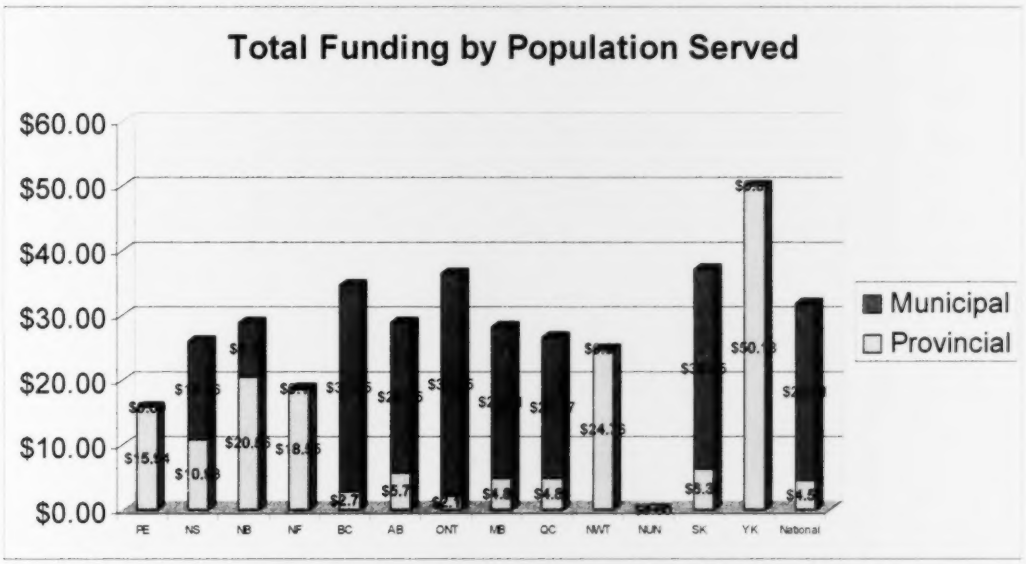

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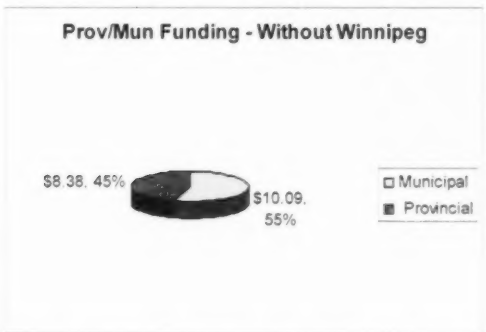
$27.41, as the highly populated Provinces of Ontario and British Columbia have municipal contributions of $34.45 and $31.95 per capita.

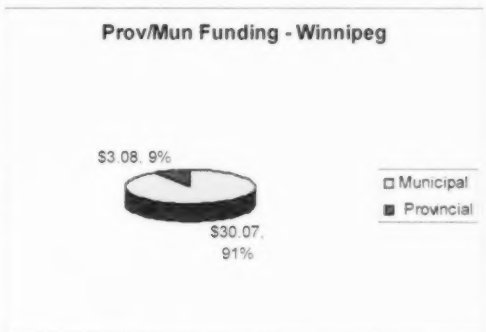
It is traditional in Canada for provincial governments to recognize the financial challenges faced by rural and remote public libraries. In Manitoba, this is evidenced by the existence of separate funding formulas for the City of Winnipeg and for the rest of the Province. The current formula in Manitoba for library systems outside of Winnipeg is:

- a matching grant of up to $8.50 per capita served,
- plus a $5,500 collection development grant,
- plus a $1,000 grant for bilingual and northern libraries.

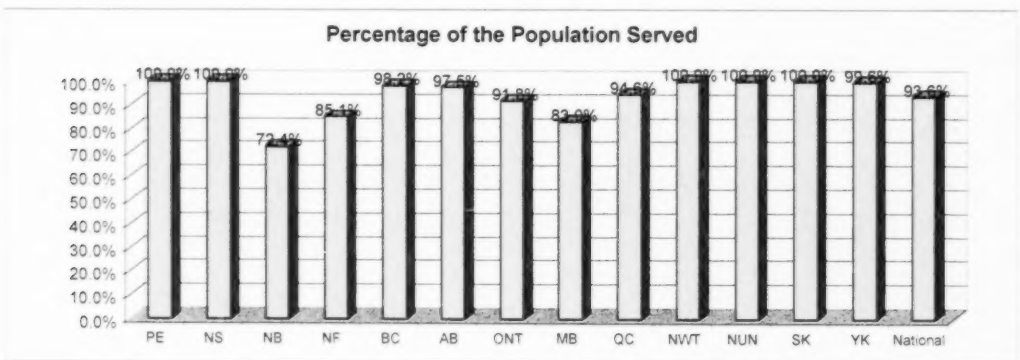
The Province of Manitoba currently provides 45% of the total operating budget of rural and northern libraries.

The funding formula for the City of Winnipeg is 11% of the WPL operating budget to a maximum of $1,910,118. This grant is currently at its maximum, with the Province providing 9% of the City of Winnipeg public library budget.





Manitoba ranks 12th out of 13 with respect to the percentage of population served by a public library. In Manitoba 83.0% of the population has access to a public library; in contrast to the national average of 93.6%.



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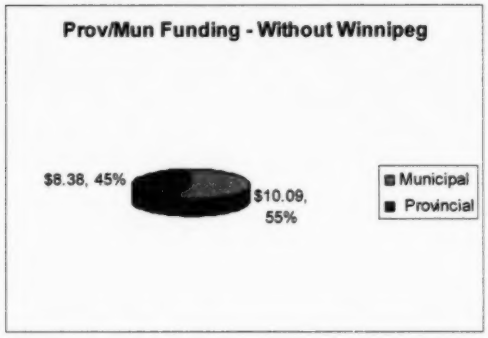

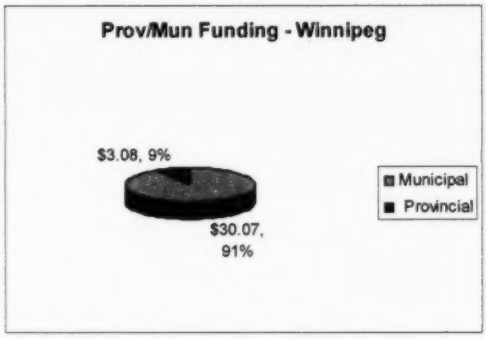

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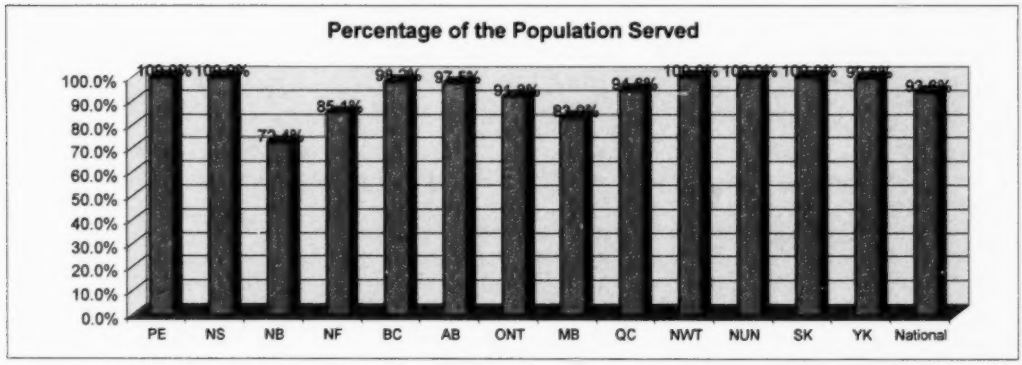
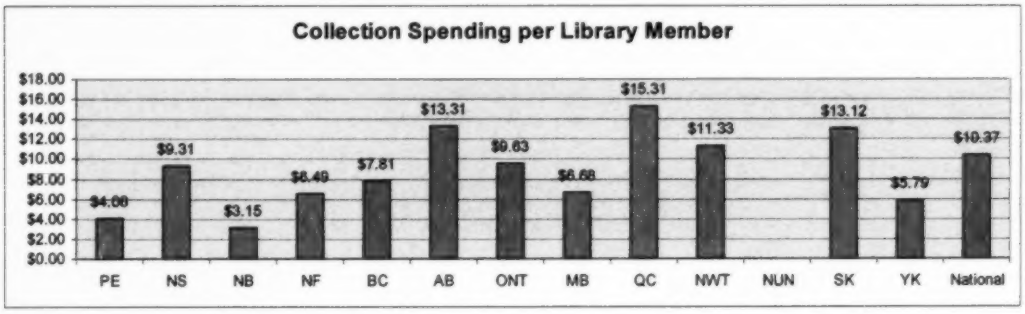


Statistics Canada released a report on November 30, 2005 on provincial, territorial and international comparisons of adult competencies.[1] Yukon, Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan ranked significantly higher in the four domains of adult competencies; prose, document, numeracy and problem solving. Manitoba consistently ranked in the average level on each of the four categories studied by Statistics Canada. New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Nunavut ranked significantly lower than the national average in all four.

The average combined municipal and provincial public library funding of the four highest ranked provinces is $37.38. The public library funding per capita in the three significantly lower Provinces and territories is less than half, at $18.43.

The provinces and territory that rank in the middle in adult competency receive $24.92 in municipal and provincial funding. Manitoba is statistically in the middle for both competency and library funding. While Manitoba and Saskatchewan are fairly similar in culture, history and size the Statistics Canada report shows that Saskatchewan is significantly higher in adult literacy and numeracy competency than Manitoba. When the library systems are compared the combined municipal and provincial funding in Saskatchewan is $37.17 per capita, and in Manitoba it is $23.47, a significant difference of $13.70 per capita.



[1] http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=89-617-XIE.

Building on our Competencies: Canadian Results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey

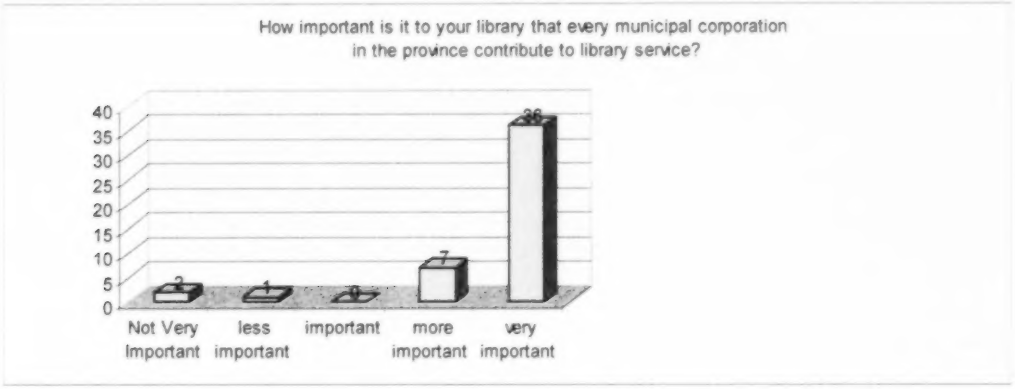
The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, undertaken in 2003, measured the proficiencies of a representative sample of Canadian adults aged 16 and over in four domains: prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy and problem solving, and benchmarked performance against an international standard. The proficiency scores are compared among provinces, territories and nations, and over time. Moreover, literacy performance is examined in relation to differences in variables such as educational attainment, employment and unemployment, earnings and self-assessed health.

3. Public Library Access for All Manitobans

Provide every Manitoban with access to the benefits of a Public Library

> *"For First Nations People to be able to compete in our modern society is essential for the whole community."* – A Manitoba First Nations community

Overwhelmingly, the library board surveys and the World Café discussions identified full participation as a priority. The vision of full participation is based on a welcoming public library system that provides free access to a fully functioning public library. The public library system would be able to reasonably meet the library user's informational and recreational needs. Access to a public library includes access for everyone, including people with disabilities.



One in six Manitobans lives in a community that does not provide access to an established public library. These 174,839 residents live in three different jurisdictional communities:

- municipal corporations that have elected not to establish a public library or join a library region (population: 112,789),
- residents of federal lands (federal parks, First Nations and Aboriginal communities and military bases) (population: 52,090), and
- residents living in unorganized communities (population: 9,960).

Currently there are two options available to the one in six Manitobans who lives in a community that does not provide public library service to its residents. The first is to purchase a non-resident membership in an existing public library system. Very few Manitobans purchase nonresident memberships. The second option is to acquire access to The Provincial Library Extension Service. This service provides only books by mail and traveling libraries (boxes of books) to individuals and communities, respectively, which do not have library service. Clearly, neither of these options is ideal, nor are they substitutes for a local, comprehensive, full-service public library.

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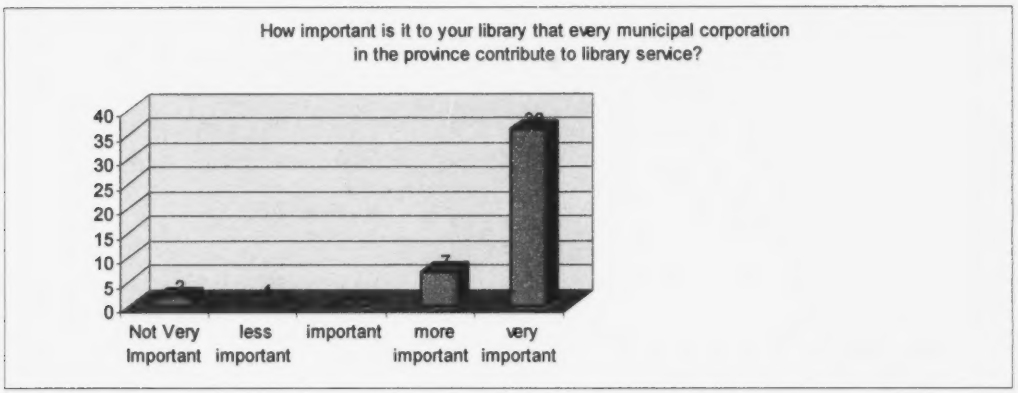

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The average public library in Manitoba has 56% of the eligible users as registered public library members. The two existing options of purchasing a non-resident membership (8%) or using the Public Library Services Branch's Open Shelf program (2-3%) reach a total of only 10% to11% of the people who live in a community that does not provide free public library service. As a result, a considerable number of Manitobans (33 to 34%) are not receiving the economic, cultural and educational benefits of a local public library.

3.1 MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS:

In the municipal survey the main reason municipalities gave for not providing public library service to their residents was the cost of the service. Additional reasons included

- inability to split their municipality into parts in order to join more than one neighboring library system,
- the Provincial per capita funding formula,
- population density,
- the availability of Open Shelf service.

Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, through the PLS Branch, has made consistent but slow progress in encouraging municipal corporations to provide library services. The vast majority of the 52 municipal corporations that remain "non-established" are rural municipalities.

3.1.1 Establishment Grant

The existing one-time establishment grant of $5,000, is no longer an effective incentive; the amount of the grant has not been changed in more than 20 years. The surveys and discussion confirmed that the grant is no longer an attractive incentive, and there is need for more than just a grant in the first year of operation.

Recommendation 1: That the library establishment grant be restructured to provide a greater incentive.

3.1.2 Municipalities Joining More Than One Library System

> *"The whole of a municipality shouldn't have to be in one regional library. There should be the ability to be a member of more than one regional library."*
> – A Non-established Municipality

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) has adopted a resolution requesting that part of a municipality be allowed to establish public library service. The opportunity to establish in only part of a municipality was supported by a large majority of survey respondents. Public Library Boards were 80% in support, and the municipalities were 76% in support. It is recognized that the goal of subdividing a

municipality is to provide municipalities with more options, and thereby increase the number of Manitobans with access to the benefits of a public library. The implementation of this recommendation must reflect this concern, as well as provide for additional local options for establishment.

Recommendation 2: That the Public Libraries Act be amended to allow municipalities that currently do not have an established public library service to sign an agreement(s) with one or more existing library regions to provide service to a portion or portions of the municipality.

3.1.3 Public Library Awareness Campaign

One of the unexpected results of the survey process was discovery of a considerable amount of misunderstanding regarding the Public Library system. For example, the two main reasons Open Shelf users cite as why they would not be supportive of their municipality providing public library service were: the size of their community and the assumption that the collection would be inadequate. The reality is, being part of the public library system provides free access to the PLS Branch 'Open Shelf' library as well as the millions of items held in Public Libraries throughout the Province. The surveys and discussion provided a common theme that Public Libraries and PLS Branch must do more to promote the comprehensive and modern service that they provide and support.

Recommendation 3: That the Province provide financial support for an information campaign about the benefits of libraries and services they provide.

> *"We feel that if a public library offering interlibrary loan is available within a 30 minute drive, this provides better service and is a better utilization of library resources. We feel it is important to encourage current non-participating towns and RM's to join neighbouring systems."* – A Public Library Board

The existing Provincial Open Shelf and Travelling Library services should be reviewed to ensure that these services are not a deterrent to library establishment. In locations where library establishment is not feasible, the programs must reach a larger percentage of the eligible population than the current level of 2 to 3%. This will require an information campaign, and a modern focus to incorporate a twenty-first century vision of library service.

Recommendation 4: That the Open Shelf and the Travelling Library programs be reviewed by the Public Library Services Branch.

Note: Further review is needed to determine if the fact that Winnipeg Public Library is excluded from regional library sections of the *Public Libraries Act* affects library establishment options in the capital region.

3.2 FEDERAL LANDS AND UNORGANIZED TERRITORIES

The *Public Libraries Act* does not allow the formal establishment of local public libraries by any entities other than municipal corporations. The result is that there are no established public libraries in Manitoba's First Nations and Aboriginal communities or in northern affairs communities.

The *Public Libraries Act* recognizes library establishments by a municipality as defined in the *Municipal Act,* which excludes federal lands. The Federal Government does not provide library grants to these communities either, resulting in no financial support to establish a public library. Interest in public library service has already been expressed by several First Nations communities including Peguis, Long Plain and Rolling River.

> *"The "Public Libraries Act" should be amended to include Armed Forces Bases, Parks and first and mostly First Nations."* – A Manitoba First Nations Community

3.2.1 Provincial Funding for Federals Lands and Unorganized Territories

Recommendation 5: That the *Public Libraries Act* and Regulation be amended to provide First Nations and Aboriginal communities, national parks and military bases with a status equivalent to municipalities for the purpose of establishment and funding local library services.

3.2.2 Create Mechanisms to Provide Community Input

An ongoing commitment from First Nations and Aboriginal communities is required in order that library establishment may occur. Enabling First Nations and Aboriginal communities to have access to the same funding formula as municipal corporations is a beginning. However a more tailored funding model and structure may be required to deliver an effective library service in these communities. Through the direct involvement of First Nations and Aboriginal communities, Ontario and Saskatchewan have created separate, tailored service models and funding structures that could provide guidance for Manitoba.

> *"Everyone deserves access regardless of location for the advancement of education and literacy."* – A Public Library Board

Recommendation 6: That the Minister establish a task force comprised of leaders within the Aboriginal community and library specialists to provide the Minister with advice regarding library services for the Aboriginal communities.

> *"I believe when one priority area for INAC and Provincial Education is Literacy we lack access to resources to address this issue."* – A Manitoba First Nations Community

Recommendation 7: That an Aboriginal library consultant be hired to provide support and advice regarding the establishment of public library services.

The surveys confirmed that library establishment in First Nations and Aboriginal communities is well supported, as 72% of Public Library Boards thought it was important to their library systems. The First Nations community survey responses showed that interest in library service was high.

3.3 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Advancements in technology allow more individuals to gain access to the many benefits of a public library. For example, new software and hardware technology allows users who have print impairments to conduct research on the Internet or "read" a book.

3.3.1 Removing Barriers

> One location does not have wheel chair accessibility. All 3 locations don't have alarm systems with lights for people who are deaf or colour contrast. – A Public Library Board

Progress has been made in making libraries more accessible to all. For example, 91% of public libraries now have wheelchair accessible entrances and 77% have accessible washrooms and book stacks. For users with visual and mobility issues 60% of the public libraries have at least one public access computer equipped to meet their needs. More must be accomplished to ensure access to high quality library services for "all Manitobans".

Recommendation 8: That public libraries strive to remove the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing the benefits of the library.

As the population ages, a larger number of Manitobans may not be capable of physically visiting the local public library. Two-thirds of Manitoba library systems provide a "home bound" service whereby materials are delivered to the user's home by library volunteers or staff. Efforts must be made to extend this service to the remaining third of Manitoba's library systems. An option supported by 60% of the library systems is for the Open Shelf program to be made available in those library systems that do not have a home bound program.

Recommendation 9: That public libraries, in partnership with the Public Library Services Branch, examine co-operative options to provide library services to home bound residents.

4. Create a Sustainable Model for the 21st Century Public Library

The vision is for Manitoba to have not only a high quality library service for all Manitobans but a system that is sustainable. The public library system in Manitoba cost effectively meets the information and reading demands of the public it now serves. In 2003, half a million individual Manitobans borrowed 8.5 million items, took part in programming, received answers and used the internet, all for $28.5 million in combined Provincial and Municipal dollars.

4.1 FUNDING

The library system in Manitoba employs a cooperative model of delivering a critical community service through the efforts of staff, volunteers, municipal and provincial governments. The library is often a community meeting place, providing a safe and comfortable environment where all are welcome.

Volunteers are delivering books to homebound users, shelving and repairing books, delivering children's programming and raising funds. Local governments provide buildings, Board expertise and operating funds. The Provincial Government provides training and developmental consulting, maintenance of the MAPLIN system and part of operating funding. The library Staff delivers this valuable service through long hours and dedication. The strength of this support system is that everyone is working together to make it successful.

Availability of financial resources is the leading concern of library boards, staff and local governments. Staff wish to enhance children's programming, Internet access, adult literacy and training, hours of operation, homework help, and electronic and print collections.

> Our library is a vital part of our community - being a focal point within the community. ... the per capita system concerns us as rural populations continue to decline. That does not mean the needs of our community and facility decline. The price of books continues to rise, more people are using the library for the new book access and we do our best to accommodate, but we only have so much guaranteed money to operate with. – A Public Library Board

4.1.1 Funding Formula

Manitoba's population is migrating from smaller to larger communities. As a result, some library systems have experienced and will likely continue to experience a declining population. The issue of depopulation is critical to these systems, as the basis of provincial funding is a matching per capita grant.

Recommendation 10: That the province and municipalities establish a funding mechanism to address current trends in population and operating costs.

4.1.2 Collection Development Grant

Despite a $5,500 annual collection development grant for rural and northern libraries, Manitoba is only spending $6.68 per member on print and electronic library materials. This is well below the national average of $10.37 per library member. There is a strong correlation between the purchase of new materials and library use. Manitoba's total per capita spending on library materials of $3.02 is well below the national average of $4.41. The provincial jurisdictions that lead the country in the four adult competency skills (See Section 2, page 7) also lead the country in library collection spending per capita.

The existing Collection Development Grant, while popular in rural and northern Manitoba, does not provide collection support to any municipality with more than one library branch or to the City of Winnipeg.

Recommendation 11: That the annual Collection Development Grant be extended to include all library branches in the province that meet the qualification of being open at least ten hours a week, and agree to share their collections through the MAPLIN system.

4.2 BENEFITS OF INCREASED COOPERATION

Manitoba is unique in Canada in that it has not developed a true regional library model. Legislation enabled the creation of regions but did not impose a model on the municipalities. The result is that Manitoba has 107 public libraries within 55 governing bodies. The only library systems with more than four branches are Winnipeg Public Library and the Parkland Regional system with twenty library branches each.

4.2.1 Regionalization

> For municipalities that do not have library service available, it would be helpful to them to join another area that already provides this service for their residents. – A Rural Municipality

Staff in individual or small regional libraries are often very familiar with users' informational needs and recreational reading tastes. This enables better targeting of the purchase of books and other materials to their users and often results in an effective use of collection dollars and a high rate of circulation of books and other materials per capita. A disadvantage is the limited pool of staff resources, with most branches staffed by one or two individuals who are responsible to open the doors, select and order materials, process and catalogue

the materials, circulate and shelve the books, provide programming, manage the building, maintain the budget, advise the Board, and so on. Often planning, training, promotion, advanced programming options and professional participation, while valued and desired, are not accomplished.

It is difficult for small regions to gain economies of scale from suppliers, as many discounts are based on volume. Small regions should investigate options to achieve economies of scale through cooperative ventures that increase purchasing power, share employee skills and deliver joint programming. Cooperation has been very successful in the MAPLIN (Manitoba Public Library Information Network) system in which all of Manitoba is considered one region for Inter-Library loan.

Larger regions with circulation statistics that are below the provincial average would benefit from investigation into the reasons for this lower use level.

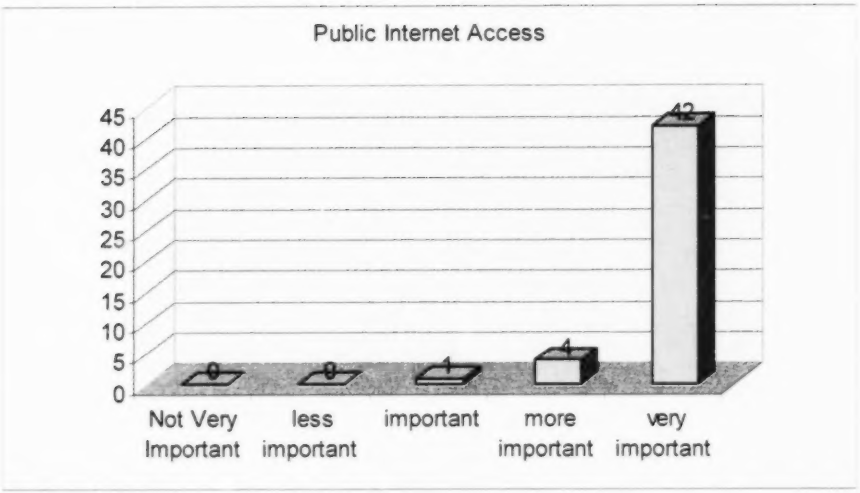
Recommendation 12: That library regions consider mergers to create larger regions in order to gain economies of scale and to make the library region more attractive to non-established municipalities in the area.

4.3 SUSTAINING TECHNOLOGY

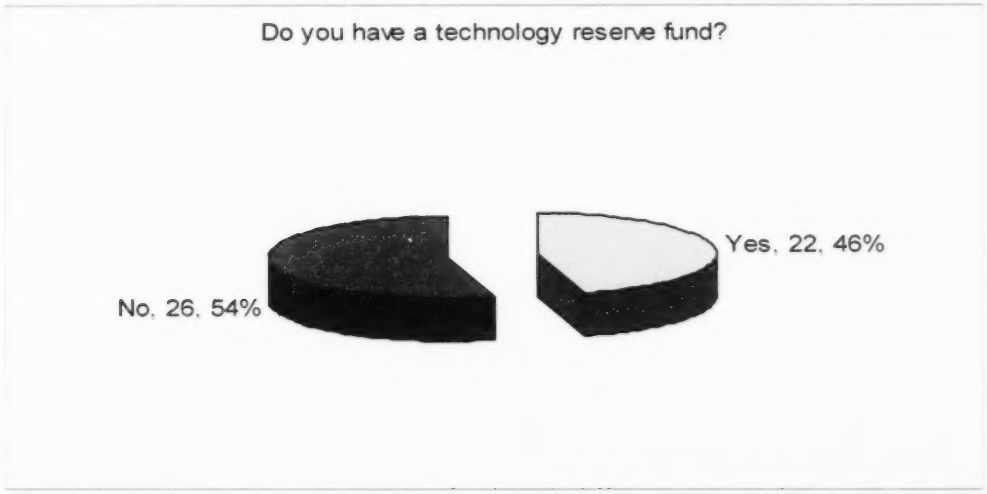
Public libraries have been at the forefront of information technology use, because they understand the benefits that automation provides to their staff and users.

> *"Public Libraries allow those who don't own computers to have access to a computer and Internet; books are expensive, libraries allow everyone to have access to quality materials, regardless of income." – Municipal Survey*

Access to the Internet and other electronic resources is now part of a library's fundamental, and expected role. Statistics Canada studies show that after home, office and school the public library is the public's primary point of Internet access. In the Review Survey, public Internet access was the second most mentioned benefit of public libraries by Manitoba municipalities.

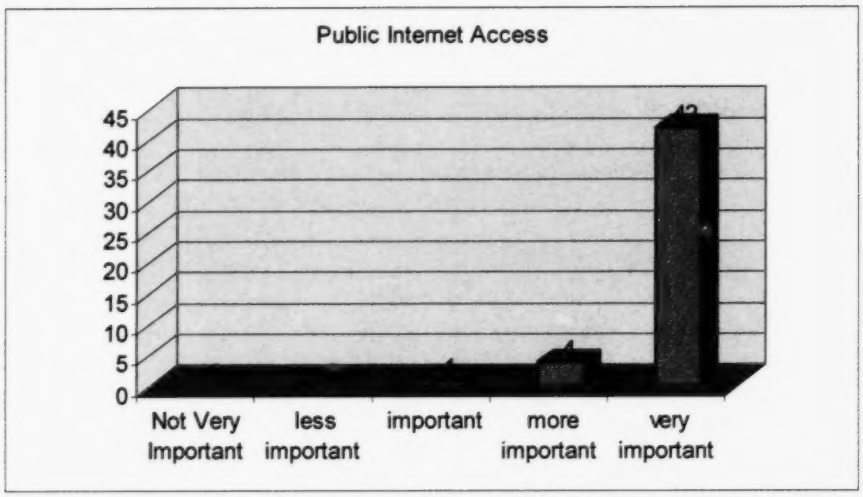


Municipal corporations and library boards expressed concern that the increasing costs of automation have placed a significant strain on limited library budgets. As computer equipment is aging, most private, provincial and federal funding programs are no longer available to replace or upgrade the equipment.



The majority of public libraries in Manitoba do not have a technology reserve fund even though automation is integral to almost every service the modern library provides. With limited outside grant possibilities, it is essential that library systems budget for automation as part of their regular operating costs.

Recommendation 13: That an annual technology maintenance grant be made available to each library branch including Winnipeg Public Library to be used for hardware or software replacement, for purchase of digital content or Internet access.



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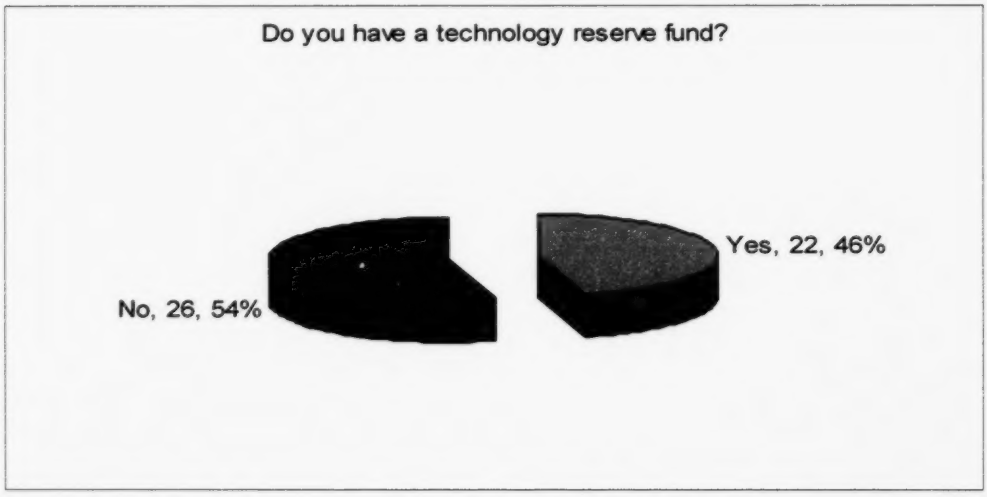

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4.4 JOINT USE FACILITIES

An option with the potential to save some operating dollars is to locate a public library in a joint use facility. This can be effective for all partners when the public library, with its high traffic rate, is brought into a public facility.

> "Provide a library space where there is not one. The school's collection of books could be accessed by the public."
> – A Public Library Board

A possibility is the joint school/public library. There are examples in Manitoba where this has been both successful and not. In overall terms the joint school/public library increases the use of the library by youth in the school, but often at the cost of decreased use by adults. Schools and parents raise the concern of student safety, since the library is an open public place where all are welcome and left unsupervised. Many adult library users are uncomfortable entering a school.

> "Public and school libraries serve different clientele. Public libraries work best when located downtown (Schools tend to be located away from commercial access). Adults are reluctant to compete with students for library service at a school. ... Jurisdictional problems arise over who's in charge, principal or librarian / school board or public library board?"
> – A Public Library Board

The books and other materials collections are also quite different at the school and the public library, as the public library has adult materials, which may raise concerns for parents of small children. School library materials are curriculum based, and most schools do not allow the sharing of these materials with other libraries.

In some communities, nonetheless, the only viable option is a public library in the school and through considerable planning this model can work. A well-designed agreement can address a number of concerns including hours of operation, governance, access, parking, staffing, and collection development and use.

Recommendation 14: That the Public Library Services Branch develop governance and operational guidelines for joint use facilities.

5. Create a High Quality Public Library System

The continued use of new technologies provides public libraries with a wonderful opportunity to develop an even higher level of service. Internet technology provides an opportunity for the most remote public library staff and users to come together virtually to develop, learn, promote, share and create.

Cost effective technology now allows for instant downloading of books in text or audio format, music and movies.

5.1 TECHNOLOGY

5.1.1 High Speed Internet Access

Every public library will need current technology in order to gain the benefits of online materials, resource sharing and training. A minimum requirement for every public library is to have high speed Internet access and at least one modern workstation capable of two way video and sound functions.

Recommendation 15: That high speed Internet access be made available at every public library in the province for staff and public access.

5.1.2 Distributed and Interactive MAPLIN

MAPLIN does not include current item status of the materials in the system. This could be accomplished through the development of local systems that have compatible Z39.50[2] servers. Local Z39.50 servers would provide considerable time savings at the local libraries and at Public Library Services Branch as there would no longer be a need to manually update the MAPLIN system.

The action would benefit staff at the libraries, and as a result more time could be spent working directly with the public, delivering a full range of services.

Staff time at the Public Library Services Branch could be better spent providing service to client libraries.

Recommendation 16: That the development of local library Internet servers be encouraged to enable province wide resource and information sharing.

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[2] Z39.50 is a standard that specifies a technical protocol for searching and retrieving information from multiple remote online catalogues or other Z39.50-compliant databases; It is an information retrieval protocol that supports communication among different information systems, making it possible for a user to search various systems.

5.1.3 Electronic Content

> "Provincial license for library automation software; expand services offered through Ebscohost; Provincial license for Novelist; Lobby Federal Government to speed up provision of high speed Internet connection to remote areas; Lobby Federal Government to provide nation-wide support for libraries; Need to ease restrictions on access to Talking Books through PLS - librarians know their patrons' needs." – A Public Library Board

The creation of electronic content is increasing daily. Providing access to content is a technological advancement that public libraries across Canada and around the world have adopted enthusiastically. Currently the Province provides public libraries with access to Ebsco host, a full text magazine and journal service, as well as access to the CNIB's Visunet.

There is a need and an opportunity to expand on this base of electronic information to include keyword searchable digital reference books and novels, and to provide audio/visual materials through the Internet. Increasingly, library users expect to be able to download a "book" from the library onto their personal PDA or MP3 player for use outside of the library. This expectation is particularly prevalent amongst young adults – the demographic group that will determine the future relevance and support of today's libraries.

Recommendation 17: That MAPLIN be expanded to include content such as electronic journals, books and audio books throughout the province for all library users.

5.2 TRAINING

A 2005 study conducted by the University of Alberta concluded that in the next five to ten years there will be a significant shortage of library professionals across Canada. The same study suggests that Manitoba and Saskatchewan will have a more difficult time attracting professionals as a result of lower salaries, geography and the absence of a professional library school in each of these provinces. [3]

Recent experience in filling professional positions in rural Manitoba has revealed difficultly in attracting library professionals to larger rural centers like Brandon and Dauphin.

The vast majority of Manitoba's rural and northern public library workers are not formally qualified as librarians or library technicians. Nonetheless, library administrators and their staff are dedicated and are providing an effective library service.

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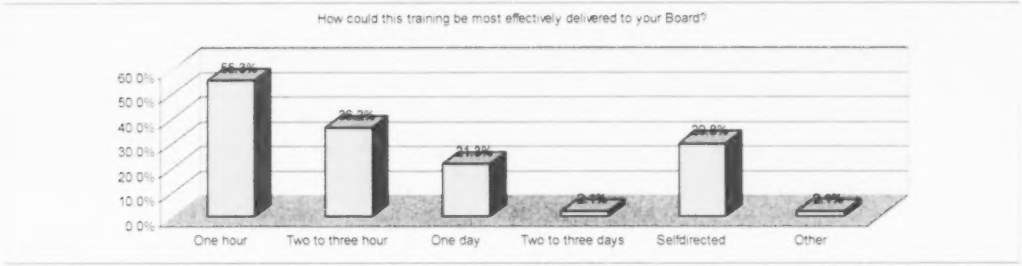
[3] *The Future of Human Resources in Canadian Libraries: 8Rs Canadian Library Human Resource Study.* (8Rs Research Team, February 2005). (http://www.ls.ualberta.ca/8rs/8RsFutureofHRLibraries.pdf)

Recognizing that over 85% of the rural and northern library workforce is not professionally trained, it is critical to provide training opportunities to develop their skills. Existing training opportunities provided by the PLS Branch are well received and attended, but are restricted in scope and frequency.

The use of on-line technology and the development of partnerships will be critical to increasing educational opportunities for library staff.

Board training is also important and needed. Training should include short workshops, and opportunities to engage in self-directed study and training that does not require considerable travel time.



Recommendation 18: That library staff and trustees receive ongoing training.

5.3 LIFELONG LEARNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Public libraries in Manitoba and throughout Canada have an important role to play in supporting independent lifelong learning. The public library is seen as a safe, affordable, informal and convenient location in which to pursue formal and informal education and skills development. Its role is to provide an equitable opportunity for all citizens to gain access to information.

> *"Libraries are a very essential service to the public and are being demanded by the public more and more and library service needs to be open more to the public. Although Internet service at one time was thought to decrease library service the trend has turned around and request for a library is greater now than before. Libraries need to be open in order for public to use them."*
> – A Rural Municipality

Literacy programming is an important service of a public library and is usually accomplished within existing resources or through a partnership with another local community group. The library often provides the space and access to materials for the literacy programming, while the partner group provides instructors and administration of the program.

A recent study from Pennsylvania showed a link between library programming and skills development.

> *"City council believes in a holistic approach in providing services to our residents. Library services are essential in the development of a self sustaining community."* – A Rural Municipality

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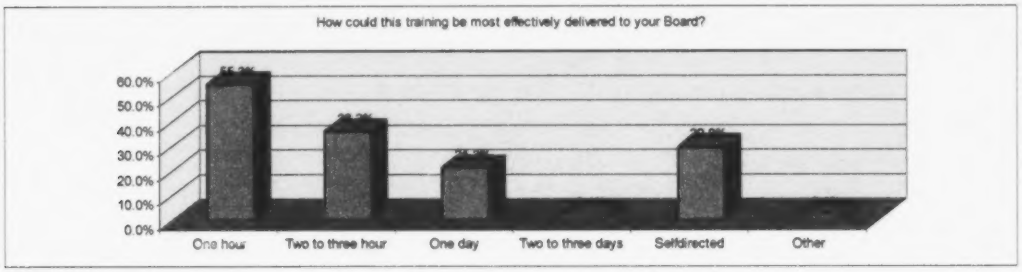

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A recent study from Pennsylvania showed a link between library programming and skills development.

> *"City council believes in a holistic approach in providing services to our residents. Library services are essential in the development of a self sustaining community."* – A Rural Municipality

The study concluded "...experimental methods showed that children who attend library summer reading programs read significantly better than those children who attended a camp program, suggesting that time spent in a library significantly enhances children's reading achievement when compared to activities more purely recreational in nature. This finding underscores the important position the library plays in reading achievement of all children, particularly those who lack access to books and other reading materials in their daily lives."[4]

Manitoba's largest library system, Winnipeg Public Library, has made literacy a priority and has developed a multi-layered partnership with community organizations, foundations and governments.

Formalized literacy programming is not available at every public library in Manitoba. Considering its importance and the success of literacy partnerships with libraries and literacy groups, more effort is needed to provide these programs throughout the province.

Recommendation 19: That the role and capacity of public libraries to provide lifelong learning and community development be strengthened.

In communities without a post secondary educational institution, the local public library provides a reliable support for distance education students. The library provides free access to email and the Internet, research materials, inter-library loans, study space and exam proctoring. This partnership is formally recognized by Universities; with other institutions it occurs informally.

Recommendation 20: That the Public Library Services Branch, in partnership with government and non-government agencies, develop guidelines for public library literacy programs.

5.4 CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

Both the World Café and the annual PLS Branch Conference highlighted the importance of communication and opportunities for the exchange of ideas. However, there is no ongoing forum to express ideas within the Manitoba public library community.

5.4.1 Library Advisory Boards

A need was expressed for a permanent communication mechanism between similar sized library systems and the PLS Branch. In addition to in-person meetings, the use of video conferencing and other communication technologies

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[4] http://www.statelibrary.state.pa.us/libraries/lib/libraries/Role%20of%20Libraries.pdf
The role of public libraries in childrens literacy development: An evaluation report. Dr. Donna Celano (Temple University) & Dr. Susan B. Neuman (University of Michigan) p. 48

could enable virtual meetings, which could be organized to allow for an exchange of ideas, best practices and information.

Recommendation 21: That the Public Library Services Branch create five Librarian Advisory Committees to provide advice, exchange information and raise ideas.

5.4.2 Library Standards

At the World Café and in the surveys, library boards requested that the PLS Branch provide standards and guidelines for the management and operation of public libraries.

Recommendation 22: That within three years the Public Library Services Branch develop, in consultation with the library community, recommended standards for hours of opening, staffing standards, collection development and accessibility and other relevant measures of library effectiveness.

Conclusion

The consultation, deliberation and creative thought that defined the process of developing this report must continue through the implementation stage.

It is important that the partnerships continue to grow and that Action Plans be developed to realize the Review Committee's Vision. By making this province one that provides "high quality, sustainable public library services for all Manitobans" we will be enriching our present and strengthening our future.

6. Appendix: Priorities and Recommendations Chart

Twenty–two recommendations were identified in the Public Library Review process. From those recommendations, three key goals and ten objectives were developed. The table on the following pages is a visual representation of each recommendation as it relates to the goals and objectives of the report. This table will be used to develop action plans to implement the vision of "high-quality, sustainable public library services for all Manitobans".

Vision → Goals → Objectives → Recommendations

VISION

Provide High Quality, Sustainable Public Library Services For All Manitobans

Goal # 1 Access

Objective 1
Encourage Library Establishment

Recommendation 1
That the library establishment grant be restructured to provide a greater incentive.

Recommendation 2
That the Public Libraries Act be amended to allow municipalities that currently do not have an established public library service to sign an agreement(s) with one or more existing library regions to provide service to a portion or portions of the municipality.

Recommendation 12
That library regions consider mergers to create larger regions in order to gain economies of scale and to make the library region more attractive to non-established municipalities in the area.

Objective #2
Promote Public Libraries

Recommendation 3
That the Province provide financial support for an information campaign about the benefits of libraries and services they provide.

Objective #3
Enhance and Improve PLS Branch Program Delivery to Support the Access Goal of the Review

Recommendation 4
That the Open Shelf and the Travelling Library programs be reviewed by the Public Library Services Branch.

Recommendation 8
That public libraries strive to remove the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing the benefits of the library.

Recommendation 9
That public libraries, in partnership with the Public Library Services Branch, examine co-operative options to provide library services to home bound residents.

Objective #4
Extend public library services to Manitobans living on federal lands.

Recommendation 5
That the *Public Libraries Act* and Regulation be amended to provide First Nations and Aboriginal communities, national parks and military bases with a status equivalent to municipalities for the purpose of establishment and funding local library services.

Recommendation 6
That the Minister establish a task force comprised of leaders within the Aboriginal community and library specialists to provide the Minister with advice regarding library services for the Aboriginal communities.

Recommendation 7
That an Aboriginal library consultant be hired to provide support and advice regarding the establishment of public library services.

VISION

Provide High Quality, Sustainable Public Library Services For All Manitobans

Goal # 2 Sustainability

Objective #5

Ensure that funding programs for public libraries contribute to their sustainability

Recommendation 10
That the Province and municipalities establish a funding mechanism to address current trends in population and operating costs.

Recommendation 11
That the annual Collection Development Grant be extended to include all library branches in the province that meet the qualification of being open at least ten hours a week, and agree to share their collections through the MAPLIN system.

Recommendation 13
That an annual technology maintenance grant be made available to each library branch including Winnipeg Public Library to be used for hardware or software replacement, for purchase of digital content or internet access.

Objective #6

Enhance and Improve PLS Branch Program Delivery to Support the Sustainability Goal of the Review

Recommendation 14
That the Public Library Services Branch develop governance and operational guidelines for joint use facilities.

VISION

Provide High Quality, Sustainable Public Library Services For All Manitobans

Goal #3 Quality

Objective #7
Increase the technological capacity of public libraries throughout the province.

Recommendation 15
That high speed internet access be made available at every public library in the province for staff and public access.

Recommendation 16
That the development of local library Internet servers be encouraged to enable province wide resource and information sharing.

Objective #8
Enhance and Improve PLS Branch Program Delivery to Support the Quality Goal of the Review

Recommendation 17
That MAPLIN be expanded to include content such as electronic journals, books and audio books throughout the province for all library users.

Recommendation 18
That library staff and trustees receive ongoing training.

Recommendation 22
That within three years the Public Library Services Branch develop, in consultation with the library community, recommended standards for hours of opening, staffing standards, collection development, and accessibility and other relevant measures of library effectiveness.

Objective #9
Develop a province-wide mechanism to enhance communication amongst the province's public libraries, and to and from the PLS Branch.

Recommendation 21
That the Public Library Services Branch create five Librarian Advisory Committees to provide advice, exchange information and raise ideas.

Objective #10
Strengthen the role of the public library in the community.

Recommendation 19
That the role and capacity of public libraries to provide lifelong learning and community development be strengthened.

Recommendation 20
That the Public Library Services Branch, in partnership with government and non-government agencies, develop guidelines for public library literacy programs.